Betwixt Vice and Virtue

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Betwixt Vice and Virtue

by amoralagent

Summary

"Y'know, normal people just-- I don't know, pass out after sex?" Hannibal gave a small hum of acknowledgement, "David fucking Hume isn't going to get me riled."

"Humour me." He heard the instruction more through the staccato rumble under his ribs than his actual voice. Will groaned.

So, Hannibal wants to talk about the philosophical ideas of personal identity, and Will wants to partake in some *aggressive cuddling* if ya know what I mean. He's filthy and I hate him.

Notes

I don't actually hate him but he is filthy.

Will was nestled between Hannibal's legs with his head on his stomach, still catching his breath. It seemed that he was still sticky and sweating, the sheets covering his head, and warm thighs doing little to cool him down. But he didn't mind at all; their shared breathing and noises, the smell of sweat and sex cloying in the air, made it feel like their territory. As if they occupied every inch of space, every corner and crevasse to carve out as theirs, and wipe any lurking anxieties from Will's mind to scatter amongst the shadows.

After a long moment, Hannibal stirred and pushed the covers from Will's face to scratch soothing circles at the base of his scalp. Will hummed agreeably, dragging his hands up from where they were resting either side of Hannibal's waist to tuck them under his lower back. When Will moved his head to meet Hannibal's gaze from such an odd angle, his stubble grazed over his skin, as did his teeth, in a playful bite to the jut of his hip. Hannibal made a low, pleased sound, like a big, lounging cat purring.

Hannibal's fingers settled in Will's soft and dampened curls, regarding him with narrow eyes. Heavy-lidded with mirth and adoration. His voice was gruff from the soreness of throat: "You're always thinking about something else." Will said, slightly scolding.

"Only of you." Hannibal offered, admiring him more obviously now, "Of how much you mean, and what you are."

Will scoffed a laugh, "Judgemental?"

"Appreciating," Hannibal corrected, brushing the hair back from Will's face, "You aren't the same man that I first met." There was no hint of sadness or accusation there, an obvious soliloquy that implied far more things than it first appeared to. It certainly wasn't an insult.

"Neither are you." A smile caught Will's mouth before he could quell it: "Adapt, evolve, become." He raised a brow, "We're past that." Perhaps they were both thinking it, but the words resounded more once said- like some sort of mantra.

"Indeed." He intoned, and Will pulled himself up to crawl closer, a trail of kisses up Hannibal's middle in his wake, and dropped back down so he was sprawled against Hannibal's chest, able to hear his heartbeat reverberating into his own: "David Hume argued that the concept of personal identity is an illusion. Merely a totality of a person’s conscious life. And the identity of a person is forever changing- even intimately, our understandings are mostly perceptions."

"Good for him." Will sighed, stroking a finger through the thatch of hair across Hannibal's chest, aware of his sternum underneath and watching the nuance of it rising and falling, "Y'know, normal people just-- I don't know, pass out after sex?" Hannibal gave a small hum of acknowledgement, "David fucking Hume isn't going to get me *riled."*

"Humour me." He heard the instruction more through the staccato rumble under his ribs than his actual voice. Will groaned.

"Okay, so, what? He thinks people are like emotional chameleons? Or something?"

Hannibal smiled at that, "In part, yes. Our perception of ourselves isn't unified without the abstraction of a soul, or other unchanging idea. We are never knowingly ourselves, or know each other. Not wholly." He waited for Will to think about the prompt, and Will knew it, feeling his cumbersome attention without looking at him.

"Would you say you're *always changing?"* Will sounded disinterested but settled against Hannibal's shoulder to study his profile, cheekbones sharp enough to make the gods cry, lips pillowy and shining, outlined in an orange haze from the glowing bedside lamp. Lying atop his chest as they breathed. Syncopated. The reflections of the hot red muscles of their hearts facing each other in the dark.

"I'd say I'm the same person that cornered you with psychoanalysis in Crawford's office." Hannibal declared rather than suggested, lowering his eyes to watch the enrapt expression on Will's face transform to an inquisitive one, "You just see me now."

Will tried his hardest to not roll his eyes, "That's *sweet."* He enjoyed seeing Will mildly uncomfortable, even when on top of him, skin-to-skin. He enjoyed watching the emotions flicker across his face like ripples in a pond if he recalled something he didn't like: "But if that hadn't have happened, I wouldn't have been so fucked over, would I?" Will chided, only half of the way to a joke.

"In more ways than one." Hannibal looked away as he said it. Will hummed, possibly amused. He often was if Hannibal said anything suggestive or vaguely filthy-- unless it was in the right circumstance, of course.

"Your curiosity certainly wouldn't have almost got us both killed numerous times." Will moved a heavy thigh between Hannibal's, like he was checking for something he wouldn't find. He pushed himself up on an elbow to look properly at his face, watching his mouth again.

"Perhaps our becoming was always fated." One of Hannibal's palms came to rest on the expanse of Will's back in a lazy possession, "Inevitably shared." Destined seemed a bit pedantic, even for Hannibal.

"That's romantic of you." Will pointed out, avoiding mockery seeping into his tone: "But if our identity is that fluid, how can you be held responsible for anything?"

Hannibal adjusted his head against the pillow, drawing attention to the line of his throat- far from accidental: "If you are not the same person from day-to-day, you'd be annulled of your previous actions, and of their consequences. Don't the objective views of others have a larger part to play in repercussions than yourself?" Hannibal's hand shifted up Will's spine and back down, in languid strokes, "Otherwise, our behaviour as individuals would be unimpeded, and appeal solely to our own desires, malice, and relative morality."

Will's restless fingers traced lightly along the rivulet of his collarbone, tracing up to his neck and jaw as he listened to him speak: "That wouldn't hold up in court though, would it?" A grin quirked his lip. The rhetorical aspect to his words seemed strangely parental and schooling, "The fact that you murdered someone yesterday isn't invalidated because you shaved today." He scowled, *"Is it?"*

"Interesting point." To illustrate his *interesting point,* Will's fingernails tested the roughness of Hannibal's jaw and turned his face more towards him, stubble now barely dimpling the skin. His thumb moved around so he could watch as Hannibal's lips acquiesced under his touch.

"I still resent you for that, by the way." Will's focus tightened when Hannibal's teeth moved against the pad of his thumb. His pitch fell to a grumble, speaking like it was an accident, "My thighs really liked the beard."

Hannibal held his gaze, not quite smiling, "I'll keep that in mind."

"I'd hope so."

A promise of a smile reached the lines in Hannibal's eyes, *"Technically*, under that philosophy, I'm a different person to the one who married you. Who made those vows to you."

"Is that so?" Will thought it to be some kind of bait, but couldn't decide what he was trying to get at. Hannibal's breath was hot against his thumb when he spoke, expertly avoiding biting down on it when it was in a prime place to do so.

"Technically."

"Well, every experience changes us, but it doesn't change the ring." He pushed his thumb down, pushing Hannibal's bottom lip with it, swiping a sheen of spit down his chin. Debauched, just enough, only evident at a certain proximity and in the right lighting. Will's stare was unwavering.

"No." Hannibal finally confirmed, "Nor does it wave away my feelings for you." Sincere, but with a glint to his eye. He was goading.

"Right, okay. Keep trying to dig yourself out of the divorce hole." Will chuckled, finally leaning closer to replace the touch of his fingers to Hannibal's lips with his own, heavy and pressing. And then he pulled away, moving down to nip and kiss at his throat, Hannibal making that odd purring-like noise again. Will moved back up and kissed the bridge of Hannibal's nose, then his right cheekbone, pulling back for a moment to see his eyes. It always tickled him how quickly Hannibal moved to hold and caress his hips. The grip was always tight. What made it better, was the look, of utter marvel. How open his face was to him now. *This must be what gods feel like,* he'd think in the back of his mind, past his arousal. That thought sounded dark and lurid, "Your feelings being what?" Will spoke against his lips, challenging, a roll of his hips tilting Hannibal's chin up to him more, as if to bare his vulnerable parts, like some kind of animal.

"Have I not made them clear?" To have and to hold, for better or for worse.

"They could always be made a little clearer." He punctuated by moving his thigh, pressing down, and Hannibal's fingers twitched as he exhaled. As did other parts of him.

"What would you like me to say, Will?" Will bit back a growl and cradled a hand against Hannibal's neck, feeling his pulse thudding against his palm.

"Actions speak louder than words."

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